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ABILENE, KANSAS

ERICKSON, THURMAN C.: Papers, 1941-1945

Accession: A84-11  
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The papers of Thurman Clifford Erickson, Pan American Airways executive interned in the Philippines during World War II, were deposited in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library in August 1983.

Linear feet: -1  
Approximate number of pages: 1,200  
Approximate number of items: 20

In August 1983 Thurman C. Erickson executed an instrument of gift for these papers. Copyright in the unpublished writings of Thurman C. Erickson in these papers and in other collections of papers in any U.S. government agency are given and assigned to the United States of America.

Under terms of the instrument of gift the following classes of documents are withheld from research use:

1. Papers and other historical materials the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy or a libel of a living person.
2. Papers and other historical materials that are specifically authorized under criteria established by statute or Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy, and are in fact properly classified pursuant to such statute or Executive order.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Dec 27, 1910	Born
Sep 15, 1934	Married - Elizabeth; children - David, Barbara
Apr 1935	Employed by Pan American Airways
Sep 21, 1941	Departed U.S. for Philippines
Dec 8, 1941	War in Philippines
Jan 6, 1942	Interned at Santo Tomas University/Internment Camp
Jul 42-Jan 43	St. Luke's Hospital
Jan-Mar 43	Ateneo, Jesuit College
Mar-May 43	Philippines General Hospital
May-Jul 43	Ateneo, Jesuit College
Jul 43-Feb 45	Santo Tomas Internment Camp
Feb 3, 1945	Released by American forces
Mar 30, 1945	Arrived in San Francisco

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The personal papers of Thurman Clifford Erickson, Pan American Airways executive interned in the Philippines during World War II, cover the years 1941 to 1945. From January 1942 to February 1945, Erickson and over 3,000 other civilians were held by the Japanese at the Santo Tomas Internment Camp in Manila.

Erickson described the events surrounding these papers in a letter to the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library dated March 18, 1983 as follows: "Hostilities commenced in Manila on Monday Dec. 8 at which time I had completed my mission for Pan Am and was awaiting my transportation home. I was living in Cavite with some of the U.S. personnel assigned to the Manila station. Unfortunately the airplane I was scheduled to board as a crew member for my return to San Francisco made three aborted attempts to fly from the mainland to Honolulu and was turned back each time by weather. Had that airplane fulfilled its original schedule I would have arrived home on the morning of Dec. 8, 1941. That little quirk of fate strongly influenced my mental outlook in the days and weeks that followed.

"My first thought of recording events was to start a diary. For some reason this proved to be difficult and the thought of jotting down notes at the end of the day of the sort of things I would have normally shared with my family seemed to make the writing easier.

"It was necessary to conceal the notes from time to time when Jap inspections were anticipated. This presented no problems as I worked in the hospital - in both the first aid area and the kitchen.

"Unfortunately I did walk away from my chair in the hall outside my room one night and left approx. two weeks of notes lying there and they never were recovered. That was the only break in continuity until the final week of internment.

"I discontinued my notes about a week before our rescue by Gen. McArthur's task force which occurred on Sat. Feb. 3. The week leading up to that momentous event was so hectic I simply did not have time to write. I therefore went back some time later and attempted to briefly summarize the highlights of events during that last week and the period that followed until Feb. 22, the day I left camp for home. Those last several weeks were so filled with dramatic and exciting events one could write a book on that period alone."

The material consists of a diary (1941-1945), a typescript copy of part of the diary (1941-1943), memorabilia, and two books accessioned in August 1983. The diary constitutes 30% of the total material, with the typed version and the books each comprising one-third. The remainder is memorabilia.

The diary covers fairly evenly the entire period of internment, with a few gaps due to loss of material (Jan. 15-25, 1942; Feb. 14 - Mar. 1, 1942; Dec. 3, 1944) or consolidation (Dec. 8-20, 1942; portions of Nov. and Dec., 1944). In March of 1942 the diary assumes a letter format in which Erickson describes his day to his wife and family. The content of daily entries, however, remained basically unchanged: news and rumors about the war; work, diet, and personal health conditions; and general camp life. Of particular interest is the relationship of available news to the actual events of the war. Also interesting are Erickson's identifications of air activity. The typescript covers the diary entries December 11, 1941 to March 17, 1943, and makes minor editorial changes from the original. Portions of six diary entries have been deleted in accordance with criteria in the donor's letter of gift. The original diary was transferred to the vault for preservation purposes.

Erickson was not a part of the camp government, but he did contribute to its operation by working in the hospital clinic and kitchens. The memorabilia contains copies of some official notices and publications. The books included in this collection (Santo Tomas Internment Camp: STIC in Verse and Reverse, STIC-toons and STIC-tistics by James E. McCall, and Santo Tomas Internment Camp by Frederic H. Stevens) provide an excellent complement to the diaries in this regard. While the diaries give a personal perspective on camp life, Stevens' narrative focuses on the activities of the Central Committee and special committees' functions. Stevens chronicles the transformation of Santo Tomas University into an internment camp operating with a system of self-government under Japanese supervision. McCall's volume adds the results of several surveys and lists the Japanese rules which were enacted during the general tightening up during 1944. McCall also provides a humorous commentary on camp life and administration with cartoons and poems produced during internment.

## DESCRIPTION OF SERIES

<u>Box Nos.</u>	<u>Series</u>
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- |     |  |
|-----|--|
| 1   | I. DIARIES (1941-1945), 1/2 container. Diary covers the period December 11, 1941 to February 3, 1945. Describes life as a civilian interned by the Japanese in the Philippines. Arranged chronologically.  |
| 1,2 | II. TYPESCRIPT (1941-1943), 1/2 container. Typed version of diary includes period December 11, 1941 to March 17, 1943. Minor editorial changes from original handwritten diary. Arranged chronologically.  |
| 2   | III. MEMORABILIA (1941-1945), 1/15 container. Internment camp organization information and camp notices, copies of photographs, newspaper clipping of the internees' return, Japanese military currency, and a Pan Am pamphlet describing internment are arranged chronologically. |
| 2   | IV. BOOKS (1945-1946), 1/3 container. Two books by internees describing the Santo Tomas Internment Camp.   |

## CONTAINER LIST

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Contents</u>
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SERIES I: DIARIES. 1941-1945

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Diary, Dec. 11, 1941 - Apr. 30, 1942 |
|   | Diary, May 1 - Sep. 2, 1942          |
|   | Diary, Sep. 2, 1942 - Mar. 2, 1943   |
|   | Diary, Mar. 2 - Oct. 3, 1943         |
|   | Diary, Oct. 3, 1943 - Aug. 5, 1944   |
|   | Diary, Aug. 5, 1944 - Feb. 3, 1945   |

SERIES II: TYPESCRIPT. 1941-1943

- Typescript, Dec. 11, 1941 - Mar. 31, 1942
- Typescript, Apr. 1 - May 1, 1942
- Typescript, May 2 - Jun. 30, 1942
- Typescript, Jul. 1 - Aug. 31, 1942
- Typescript, Sep. 1 - Oct. 31, 1942
- Typescript, Nov. 1 - Dec. 31, 1942

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|---|------------------------------------|
| 2 | Typescript, Jan. 1 - Jan. 31, 1943 |
|   | Typescript, Feb. 1 - Mar. 17, 1943 |

SERIES III: MEMORABILIA. 1941-1945

Memorabilia

SERIES IV: BOOKS. 1945, 1946

McCall, James E. Santo Tomas Internment Camp: STIC in Verse and Reverse, STIC-toons and STIC-tistics. Lincoln, Nebraska: Woodruff Printing Company, 1945.

Stevens, Frederic H. Santo Tomas Internment Camp. Limited Private Edition, 1946.